A South Sea Paradise.

E. E Pollock, in the "San Francisco News Letter."

A dazzling blue sky; a generous reef bound expanse of clear transparent water, in whose lucid depths sport myriads of funny dwarfs, no less dazzling in their brilliant colorings than the coral gardens which carpet the expanse below them; a long, low stretch of beach, bordered with lofty palms, incline gracefully in their various angles, interspersed by numerous thatched roofs, extending far over the gables of the native hamlets; bright, cheerful rows of cottages shaded by majestic trees; all background by skyward miles of savage rocks, whose tops break into bold crags, the whole presenting a restful harmony in browns and grays. This is Tahiti, the paradise of the Pacific. Hidden by the spreading branches of bread fruit trees, Papeete, its capital, stretches gracefully along the beach and extends back to the foothills, the most beautiful spot in the great "milky way of the ocean." Beheld from the deck of the incoming mail, the picture is strikingly pretty and restful to the eye. Along the sward stroll bevies of dark eyed girls attired in light muslins, with here and there a gaudy shawl giving color to the view; down the beach the lithe, lean lads canter their ponies, looking, as they dash by, for approving glances from their elders, who squat upon the ground or lean against the trunks of tall palms, in listless dreaminess, at peace with themselves and the world.

In the distance Morea, Tahiti's sister island, looms grandly up against a background of amber and gold. As evening falls the sky assumes an even tint of dark metalic blue, in whose depths twinkle the stars; growing indistinct, Morea fades away into the gathering darkness, and twilight prevails. Above the cocoanut palms, silhouetted against the sky, raises the moon, and darts its shimmering rays across the water to where the ships in the gloom ride at anchor. Brawny natives in their slim canoes dart between them on their way to the fishing grounds, as the belfry chime sounds the hour of seven. Down the byways leading to the market place, in groups and singly, come the natives. Finished with their evening meal, they gather to gossip, drink, dance, sing, and make merry. About the fountain they congregate in groups, and chant their peculiar, monotonous music, while a bronzed "Othello" ladens the air with the wailing strains of an accordeon or harmonica, mingling its dirge with the drip of the fountain. Peals of bibulous hilarity come from restaurants and saloons in the Spanish-like edifices which surround the square. Shy damsels promenade with their lovers, exchanging the same old secrets.

Thus the evening passes, and the "curfew" tells the hour of ten, being lawful time for all merry makers to disperse to their respective abodes. A few moments, and the last straggler passes from view. The rising moon, mellow and radiant, fills the air with a magical light, and the silence is unbroken save by the ceaseless pounding of the ocean upon its coral barrier, sending a hollow, rolling boom over the pallid sea. Along the roads the street lanterns scintillate like stars of the first magnitude, casting their rays in wavering shadows that vanish into darkness. The twinkling stars have dipped into the far Pacific. Golden lances pierce the haze over the hills, and the sun shines bright o'er the town of Papeete.

It is Sunday morning, the Tahitienne's jubilee day, when the feast rules the hour and the rum bottle is king. From all the surrounding country and neighboring villages, groups of girls in holiday Mother Hubbard gowns and flower wreathed hats; and chocolate colored men, attired in gay colored singlets and parens, pass each other on the way to town. The market place is thronged with people, procuring supplies for the day's feasting, or sitting by the fountain and gossiping in the cheerful sun. The marketing finished and the news all told, the bronzed gathering disperses, wending their way to their various haunts to pass the day in exhilarating their spirits in the flowing bowl.

The Tahiti maid passes by, tall, stately, with the modesty of a Castilian, and walking like a queen. Besides personal charms that might awaken the slumbering passions of an anchorite, she possesses the most exquisite gifts. Her countenance is expressive, and her dark, sparkling eyes beam with intelligence. Her hair is like jet, and glossy as a raven's plume. The warm sun of ages has tinged her cheek with a hue of brown, but her complexion is as clear as the tropical sky above her. Her companion walks by her side—with measured dignity. His finely formed, manly person, his darker complexion, and stately bearing, make a fitting contrast to her softer charms. These brown visaged, mild mannered people are hospitable, and as courteous as princes. Every house is as open as the day; and the stranger, be he poor or princely, is welcome therein.

As the tourist saunters along the road leading away from Papeete, he passes numerous thatched roofed habitations, wherein the feasting is perennial; in constant succession, glimpses of tropical forests and life attract his attention. Banana and bread fruit trees, the staff of life of the Pacific, are seen in profusion; also guaras, melons, mangoes, limes and pineapples. Orange trees dangle their fruit overhead as he passes beneath their branches. Occasionally the road opens upon a native village; and among human haunts, there is nothing more peaceable or beautiful than a Tahiti village, as it presents itself for the first time to the attention of the visitor.

Leaving the road and passing along any of the paths leading up into the thickly wooded canon, one is strongly impressed by the beauty and freshness of the surroundings. Emerging from this leafy bower, a deliciously cool brook comes into view, murmuring softly as it winds its way by the close underbrush, dancing in the warm sun as it flows into the open, then rippling away into the distance of refreshing green palms, and disappearing into their depths.

It is all like a delicious dream; but landscape and life on this beautiful isle are impressionist, and will submit neither to photography nor the pen. Years of study cannot itemize the picture. There still remains in the memory but a soft sweet haze of shifting light and shade—a wilderness of happy silence and contentful ease.

Sea Poachers.

Baring Gould, in the "South African Review."

The other day I saw an old farm house in process of demolition in the parish of Altarnum on the edge of the Bodmin Moors. The great hall chimney was of unusual bulk, bulky as such chimneys usually are; and when it was thrown down it revealed the explanation of this unwonted size. Behind the back of the hearth was a chamber fashioned in the thickness of the wall to which access might have been had at some time through a low walled-up doorway, that was concealed behind the kitchen dresser and plastered over. This door was so low that it could only be passed through on all fours. Now the concealed chamber had also another way by which it could be entered, and this was through a hole in the floor of a bedroom above. A plank of the floor could be lifted, when an opening was disclosed by which any one might pass under the wall through a sort of door and down steps into this apartment which was entirely without light. Of what use was this singular concealed chamber? There could be little question. It was a place in which formerly kegs of smuggled spirits and tobacco were hidden. The place lies some fourteen or fifteen miles from Boscastle, a dangerous little harbor on the North Cornish coast, and about a mile off the main road from London, by Exter and Launceston to Falmouth. The coach travellers in old days consumed a good deal of spirits, and here in a triangle of lanes lay a little emporium always kept well supplied with a stock of spirits which had not paid duty, and whence the tayerns along the road could derive the contraband liquor, with which they supplied the travellers. Between this emporium and the sea, the roads—parish roads—lie over wild moors or creep between high hedges of earth on which the traveller can step along when the lane below is converted into the bed of a stream, also on which the wary smuggler could stride along whilst his laden mules and asses stumbled forward in the concealment of the deepest lane.

A very curious feature of the coasts of England, where rocky or wild, is the trenched and banked up paths from the caves along the coast. These are noticeable in Devon and Cornwall and along the Bristol Channel. That terrible sea front consists of precipitous walls of rock, with only here and there a dip, where a brawling stream has sawn its course down to the sea, and here there is, perhaps, a sandy shore of diminutive proportions, and the rocks around are pierced in all directions with caverns. The smugglers formerly ran their goods into these caves when the weather permitted, or the preventive men were not on the lookout. They stowed away their goods in the caves and gave notice to the farmers and gentry of the neighborhood, all of whom were provided with numerous donkeys, which were henceforth sent down to the *caches* and the kegs and bales were removed under cover of the night or of storm. As an excuse for keeping droves of donkeys, it was pretended that the sea sand and the kelp served as admirable dressing for the land; and no doubt so they did; the trains of asses sometimes came up ladened with sacks of sand, but not infrequently with kegs of brandy.

Now a wary preventive man might watch too narrowly the proceedings of these trains of asses. Accordingly squires, yoemen, farmers alike set to work to cut deep ways in the face of the Downs along the slopes of the hills, and bank them up, so that the whole caravans of laden beasts might travel up and down absolutely unseen from the sea and greatly screened from the land side. Undoubtedly the sunken ways and high banks are a great protection against the weather. So they were represented to be—and no doubt greatly were the good folks commended for their consideration for the beasts and their drivers, in thus at great cost shutting them off from the violence of the gale. Nevertheless, it can hardly be doubted that concealment from the eyes of the coastguard was sought by this means quite as much, if not more, than the sheltering the beasts of burden from the weather.

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, Preston, England, has had only two vicars in 100 years—the Rev. Robert Harris, who was vicar from Jan. 6, 1798, till 1862, and the Rev. C. H. Wood, Mr. Harris' successor, who still retains his post.